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EXAMINER

ZHEN, LI B

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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2194

SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD OF RESPONSE	MAIL DATE	DELIVERY MODE
3 MONTHS	02/06/2007	PAPER

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire 6 MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/816,372

Applicant(s)

KANEMASA ET AL.

Examiner

Li B. Zhen

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 14 November 2006.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-23 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-23 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☒ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☒ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

DETAILED ACTION

1. Claims 1 – 23 are pending in the current application.

Continued Examination Under 37 CFR 1.114

2. A request for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, including the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e), was filed in this application after final rejection. Since this application is eligible for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, and the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e) has been timely paid, the finality of the previous Office action has been withdrawn pursuant to 37 CFR 1.114. Applicant's submission filed on 11/14/2006 has been entered.

Response to Arguments

3. Applicant's arguments with respect to the claims have been considered but are moot in view of the new ground(s) of rejection.

Specification

4. The title of the invention is not descriptive. A new title is required that is clearly indicative of the invention to which the claims are directed.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 101

5. 35 U.S.C. 101 reads as follows:

Whoever invents or discovers any new and useful process, machine, manufacture, or composition of matter, or any new and useful improvement thereof, may obtain a patent therefor, subject to the conditions and requirements of this title.

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6. Claim 22 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 101 because the claimed invention is directed to non-statutory subject matter. Claim 22 recites a computer data signal embodied in a carrier wave. The claim is directed to a signal directly by claiming a medium as a “**wave**” (such as a carrier wave) . In that event, the claims are directed to a form of energy which at present the office feels does not fall into a category of invention. Therefore, claim 22 is directed to non-statutory subject matter.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

7. The following is a quotation of the first paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall contain a written description of the invention, and of the manner and process of making and using it, in such full, clear, concise, and exact terms as to enable any person skilled in the art to which it pertains, or with which it is most nearly connected, to make and use the same and shall set forth the best mode contemplated by the inventor of carrying out his invention.

8. Claims 1 – 23 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, first paragraph, as failing to comply with the written description requirement. The claim(s) contains subject matter which was not described in the specification in such a way as to reasonably convey to one skilled in the relevant art that the inventor(s), at the time the application was filed, had possession of the claimed invention.

Currently amended claims 1, 12, 15 – 17, 19 and 21 – 23 recite the new limitation “wherein processes are associated with one another among the plurality of process executing devices by sending and receiving data for executing a process without requiring sending and receiving of a process identifier” [emphasis added]. There does not appear to be a written description of the claimed limitation in the application as filed. Throughout the specification, applicant discloses sending and receiving of a process

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identifier. For example, specification discloses sending information stating that order number 138907 was used in the order process 12 with identifier A1002 [p. 23, lines 7 - 20]. The specification clearly discloses sending and receiving a process identifier [e.g., identifier A1002]. Therefore, the applicant fails to disclose "wherein processes are associated with one another among the plurality of process executing devices by sending and receiving data for executing a process without requiring sending and receiving of a process identifier" in the specification as filed.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

9. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

10. This application currently names joint inventors. In considering patentability of the claims under 35 U.S.C. 103(a), the examiner presumes that the subject matter of the various claims was commonly owned at the time any inventions covered therein were made absent any evidence to the contrary. Applicant is advised of the obligation under 37 CFR 1.56 to point out the inventor and invention dates of each claim that was not commonly owned at the time a later invention was made in order for the examiner to consider the applicability of 35 U.S.C. 103(c) and potential 35 U.S.C. 102(e), (f) or (g) prior art under 35 U.S.C. 103(a).

11. Claims 1 – 23 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,032,124 to Saito et al. [hereinafter Saito, cited in the previous office action] in view of U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2002/0046072 to Arai et al. [hereinafter Arai].

12. As to claim 1, Saito teaches a process executing device [server 110, Fig. 1; col. 4, lines 12 – 23] in a data interchange system [workflow system; col. 4, lines 23 – 32] for executing a series of process flows [coordination of the BP definitions describing the business processes inside said sites placed under decentralized management in each site; col. 3, lines 9 – 25] among a plurality of process executing devices [col. 10, lines 40 – 62], said process executing device comprising:

a process executing data interchanging unit [CALL node, Fig. 9; col. 7, lines 16 – 30] interchanging process executing data for executing a process with another process executing device [shipping document (160) delivered from the CALL node to the process node in the remote BP definition (150), Fig. 9, col. 7, lines 15 – 30], and

an interprocess association information interchanging unit interchanging with the other process executing device interprocess association information indicative of the process executed by the process executing device in association with the process executed by the other process executing device [document management unit (220) manages the shipping document (160) and the next BP location described in the BP definition (150) by associating them, and executes preprocessing to transmit the shipping document (160) to the remote server (110), by referring to the BP connection

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data, Fig. 2; col. 4, line 56 – col. 5, line 7] based on a correspondence relation between the process executing data received from the process executing data interchanging unit and the process executed by the other process executing device [BP connection data management unit (230) and the BP definition management unit (240) manage the BP connection data (170) created by the user and the BP definition (150), respectively, and execute retrieval process at the retrieval request, notifying other processing units of the retrieved result; col. 4, line 56 – col. 5, line 7], and

a process that cannot be associated with other processes in said process executing device is associated using association information that associates the process executed by the other process executing devices [making reference to the BP connection data (170), the document management unit (220) transfers to the server (110) managing the BP definition (150) of the next BP location the shipping document (160) of the IN queue (410) corresponding to the exit node; col. 5, lines 28 – 52].

Although Saito teaches the invention substantially, Saito does not specifically disclose wherein processes are associated with one another among the plurality of process executing devices by sending and receiving data for executing a process without requiring sending and receiving of a process identifier.

However, Arai teaches a workflow system [p. 4, paragraph 0075] wherein processes are associated with one another among the plurality of process executing devices by sending and receiving data for executing a process without requiring sending and receiving of a process identifier [server 820 determines based on the transfer destination description table that the system users of the transfer destination are the

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system users E, F, G and H, and transfers document data to the system users E, F, G and Hat steps 34, 36, 38, 42 shown in FIG. 46; p. 29, paragraph 0308].

It would have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify the invention of Saito to incorporate the features of associating processes with one another among the plurality of process executing devices by sending and receiving data for executing a process without requiring sending and receiving of a process identifier because this provides a workflow system in which reference data can be retrieved easily and efficiently [p. 20, paragraph 0219 of Arai] and provides a document archiving method of a workflow system in which a document attribute entry of a document processed on a workflow can be designated automatically and an attribute value thereof can be inputted automatically [p. 24, paragraph 0250 of Arai].

13. As to claim 12, Saito as modified teaches a data interchange system for executing a series of process flows among a plurality of process executing devices using a process executing data interchanging unit interchanging process executing data between the process executing devices [col. 4, line 56 – col. 5, line 8 of Saito], comprising:

an interprocess association information storing unit storing an interprocess association information indicative of a process executed by each of said plurality of process executing devices in association with the process executed by the other process executing device based on a correspondence relation between process

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executing data received from the process executing data interchanging unit and the process executed by the other process executing device, which is transmitted by the plurality of process executing devices [BP definition (150) contains the entrance node and exit node, in addition to the processing node representing one process to be treated in the workflow subsystem (180) to which the BP definition managing server (110) pertains; col. 5, line 8 – 29 and col. 5, line 52 – col. 6, line 3 of Saito]; and

an interprocess association information distribution unit distributing the interprocess association information stored in said interprocess association information storing unit to the process executing device which is related to the interprocess association information [document management unit (220) manages the shipping document (160) and the next BP location described in the BP definition (150) by associating them, and executes preprocessing to transmit the shipping document (160) to the remote server (110), by referring to the BP connection data (170); col. 4, line 56 - col. 5, line 7 of Saito]; and

wherein processes are associated with one another among the plurality of process executing devices by sending and receiving data for executing a process without requiring sending and receiving of a process identifier [server 820 determines based on the transfer destination description table that the system users of the transfer destination are the system users E, F, G and H, and transfers document data to the system users E, F, G and H at steps 34, 36, 38, 42 shown in FIG. 46; p. 29, paragraph 0308 of Arai], and

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a process that cannot be associated with other processes in said process executing device is associated using association information that associates the process executed by the other process executing devices [making reference to the BP connection data (170), the document management unit (220) transfers to the server (110) managing the BP definition (150) of the next BP location the shipping document (160) of the IN queue (410) corresponding to the exit node; col. 5, lines 28 – 52 of Saito].

14. As to claim 15, Saito teaches a data interchange system [workflow system; col. 4, lines 23 – 32 of Saito] for executing a series of process flows [col. 3, lines 9 – 25 of Saito] among a plurality of process executing devices [col. 10, lines 40 – 62 of Saito] using a process executing data interchanging unit [CALL node, Fig. 9; col. 7, lines 16 – 30 of Saito] interchanging process executing data between the process executing devices [col. 7, lines 15 – 30 of Saito], comprising:

an interprocess association unit associating the processes executed among the plurality of process executing devices based on a correspondence relation between process executing data received from the process executing data interchanging unit and a process using the data transmitted from the plurality of process executing devices and generating process association information indicative of said processes [BP definition (150) contains the entrance node and exit node, in addition to the processing node representing one process to be treated in the workflow subsystem (180) to which the BP

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definition managing server (110) pertains; col. 5, line 8 – 29 and col. 5, line 52 – col. 6, line 3 of Saito]; and

an interprocess association information distribution unit distributing the process association information generated by said interprocess association unit to the process executing device which is related to the interprocess association information [document management unit (220) manages the shipping document (160) and the next BP location described in the BP definition (150) by associating them, and executes preprocessing to transmit the shipping document (160) to the remote server (110), by referring to the BP connection data (170); col. 4, line 56 - col. 5, line 7 of Saito]; and

wherein processes are associated with one another among the plurality of process executing devices by sending and receiving data for executing a process without requiring sending and receiving of a process identifier [server 820 determines based on the transfer destination description table that the system users of the transfer destination are the system users E, F, G and H, and transfers document data to the system users E, F, G and H at steps 34, 36, 38, 42 shown in FIG. 46; p. 29, paragraph 0308 of Arai], and

a process that cannot be associated with other processes in said process executing device is associated using association information that associates the process executed by one of said plurality of process executing devices [making reference to the BP connection data (170), the document management unit (220) transfers to the server (110) managing the BP definition (150) of the next BP location

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the shipping document (160) of the IN queue (410) corresponding to the exit node; col. 5, lines 28 – 52 of Saito].

15. As to claim 16, Saito teaches a data interchange device for interchanging data concerning a process included in a series of process flows with an external device [shipping document (160) delivered from the CALL node to the process node in the remote BP definition (150), Fig. 9, col. 7, lines 15 – 30 of Saito], comprising:

an executing data interchanging unit interchanging a process executing data with the external device [shipping document (160) delivered from the CALL node to the process node in the remote BP definition (150), Fig. 9, col. 7, lines 15 – 30 of Saito];
and

an interprocess association information interchanging unit interchanging with the external device interprocess association information indicative of a process executed by the process executing device in association with the process executed by the external device [document management unit (220) manages the shipping document (160) and the next BP location described in the BP definition (150) by associating them, and executes preprocessing to transmit the shipping document (160) to the remote server (110), by referring to the BP connection data, Fig. 2; col. 4, line 56 – col. 5, line 7 of Saito] based on a correspondence relation between the process executing data received from the executing data interchanging unit and the process executed by the external device [BP connection data management unit (230) and the BP definition management unit (240) manage the BP connection data (170) created by the user and

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the BP definition (150), respectively, and execute retrieval process at the retrieval request, notifying other processing units of the retrieved result; col. 4, line 56 – col. 5, line 7 of Saito]; and

wherein processes are associated with one another among the plurality of process executing devices by sending and receiving data for executing a process without requiring sending and receiving of a process identifier [server 820 determines based on the transfer destination description table that the system users of the transfer destination are the system users E, F, G and H, and transfers document data to the system users E, F, G and H at steps 34, 36, 38, 42 shown in FIG. 46; p. 29, paragraph 0308 of Arai], and

a process that cannot be associated with other processes in said process executing device is associated using association information that associates the process executed by the executing device [making reference to the BP connection data (170), the document management unit (220) transfers to the server (110) managing the BP definition (150) of the next BP location the shipping document (160) of the IN queue (410) corresponding to the exit node; col. 5, lines 28 – 52 of Saito].

16. As to claim 17, Saito teaches a data interchange method [workflow system; col. 4, lines 23 – 32 of Saito] for interchanging data concerning a process included in a series of process flows with an external device [col. 7, lines 15 – 30 of Saito], comprising:

interchanging process executing data with the external device [shipping document (160) delivered from the CALL node to the process node in the remote BP definition (150), Fig. 9, col. 7, lines 15 – 30 of Saito] via a first communication route [from CALL node to the process node in the remote BP definition; col. 7, lines 15 - 30 of Saito]; and

interchanging with the external device, via a second communication route [from document management unit to remote server; col. 4, line 56 – col. 5, line 7 of Saito], interprocess association information indicative of the process executed by the process executing device in association with the process executed by the external device [document management unit (220) manages the shipping document (160) and the next BP location described in the BP definition (150) by associating them, and executes preprocessing to transmit the shipping document (160) to the remote server (110), by referring to the BP connection data, Fig. 2; col. 4, line 56 – col. 5, line 7 of Saito] based on a correspondence relation between the process executing data and the process executed by the external device [BP connection data management unit (230) and the BP definition management unit (240) manage the BP connection data (170) created by the user and the BP definition (150), respectively, and execute retrieval process at the retrieval request, notifying other processing units of the retrieved result; col. 4, line 56 – col. 5, line 7 of Saito], and

wherein processes are associated with one another among the plurality of process executing devices by sending and receiving data for executing a process without requiring sending and receiving of a process identifier [server 820 determines

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based on the transfer destination description table that the system users of the transfer destination are the system users E, F, G and H, and transfers document data to the system users E, F, G and H at steps 34, 36, 38, 42 shown in FIG. 46; p. 29, paragraph 0308 of Arai], and

a process that cannot be associated with other processes in said process executing device is associated using association information that associates the process executed by the external device [making reference to the BP connection data (170), the document management unit (220) transfers to the server (110) managing the BP definition (150) of the next BP location the shipping document (160) of the IN queue (410) corresponding to the exit node; col. 5, lines 28 – 52 of Saito].

17. As to claim 19, this is a product claim that corresponds to method claim 17; note the rejection to claim 17 above, which also meets this product claim.

18. As to claim 21, this is similar in scope to claim 16; therefore claim 21 is rejected for the same reasons as claim 16 above.

19. As to claim 22, this is similar in scope to claim 17; therefore claim 22 is rejected for the same reasons as claim 17 above.

20. As to claim 23, Saito teaches a method for interchanging data between an external device [col. 7, lines 15 – 30 of Saito] and a processor executing a process in a

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series of process flows [node 2 (310), node 3 (315) and node 4 (320) are processing nodes; col. 5, lines 8 – 28 of Saito], comprising:

obtaining, via a first communication route [from document management unit to remote server; col. 4, line 56 – col. 5, line 7 of Saito], interprocess association information associating first and second processes respectively executed by the processor and the external device [document management unit (220) manages the shipping document (160) and the next BP location described in the BP definition (150) by associating them, and executes preprocessing to transmit the shipping document (160) to the remote server (110), by referring to the BP connection data, Fig. 2; col. 4, line 56 – col. 5, line 7 of Saito] based on a correspondence relation between the second process and process executing data of the first process [BP connection data management unit (230) and the BP definition management unit (240) manage the BP connection data (170) created by the user and the BP definition (150), respectively, and execute retrieval process at the retrieval request, notifying other processing units of the retrieved result; col. 4, line 56 – col. 5, line 7 of Saito]; and

interchanging, via a second communication route [from CALL node to the process node in the remote BP definition; col. 7, lines 15 - 30 of Saito], the process executing data [shipping document (160) delivered from the CALL node to the process node in the remote BP definition (150), Fig. 9, col. 7, lines 15 – 30 of Saito] and the interprocess association information indicative of said first and second processes between the processor and the external device [col. 4, line 56 – col. 5, line 7 of Saito], and

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wherein processes are associated with one another among the plurality of processors by sending and receiving data for executing a process without requiring sending and receiving of a process identifier [server 820 determines based on the transfer destination description table that the system users of the transfer destination are the system users E, F, G and H, and transfers document data to the system users E, F, G and H at steps 34, 36, 38, 42 shown in FIG. 46; p. 29, paragraph 0308 of Arai], and

a process that cannot be associated with other processes in said processor is associated using association information that associates the process executed by the external device [making reference to the BP connection data (170), the document management unit (220) transfers to the server (110) managing the BP definition (150) of the next BP location the shipping document (160) of the IN queue (410) corresponding to the exit node; col. 5, lines 28 – 52 of Saito].

21. As to claim 2, Saito teaches the interprocess association information is information that associates the processes with one another using a part of the process executing data [BP definition; col. 5, lines 8 – 29].

22. As to claim 3, Saito teaches interprocess association information is part of the process executing data, and is the information for associating processes with each other using data that takes an exclusive value for each process of the series of process flows [document management unit (220) manages the shipping document (160) and the

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next BP location described in the BP definition (150) by associating them, and executes preprocessing to transmit the shipping document (160) to the remote server (110), by referring to the BP connection data; col. 4, line 56 – col. 5, line 7].

23. As to claim 4, Saito as modified teaches the interprocess association information interchanging unit interchanges the interprocess association information with the other process executing device using a transfer method different from the method used by said process executing data interchanging unit [section management part 725 transfers data to the respective system users in accordance with the sub-workflow; p. 25, paragraph 0259 of Arai].

24. As to claim 5, Saito as modified teaches the interprocess association information interchanging unit interchanges the interprocess association information at a timing that is not synchronized with the timing for interchanging the process executing data by said process executing data interchanging unit [p. 25, paragraph 0264 of Arai].

25. As to claim 6, Saito as modified teaches the interprocess association information interchanging unit periodically and collectively interchanges the interprocess association information [pp. 18 – 19, paragraph 0206 of Arai].

26. As to claim 7, Saito teaches the interprocess association information interchanging unit transmits to the other process executing device inquiry information for

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inquiring about the process which is executed by the other process executing device and is related with the process executed by the process executing device in addition to the process association information [called-out retrieval function searches the entries of the BP connection table (500) where the BP definition name and the exit node name given as parameters have the same value as the previous BP exit location (510) (710); col. 6, lines 35 – 57], and wherein the other process executing device further comprises an inquiry response unit associating the processes executed by both process executing devices and responding to the inquiry information from the process executing device [the next BP entrance location (520) out of the entries of the BP connection table (500) obtained by retrieval is returned to the document management unit (220); col. 6, lines 35 – 60].

27. As to claim 8, Saito teaches a process association information request unit requesting said interprocess association information interchanging unit in the other process executing device to transmit the interprocess association information necessary for an inquiry about the process which is executed by the other process executing device and is which related to the process executed by the process executing device in addition to the process association information before the inquiry [col. 6, lines 35 – 57]; and an inquiry unit for associating the processes executed by both process executing devices using the transmitted process association information and performing the inquiry based on the association result [col. 9, lines 25 – 45].

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28. As to claim 9, Saito teaches the interprocess association information interchanging unit dynamically determines the other process executing device to which the interprocess association information is transmitted using a part of the process executing data [next BP location described in the BP definition; col. 4, line 56 – col. 5, line 7].

29. As to claim 10, Saito teaches the process executing device in the data interchange system further comprising:

an association definition storing unit storing a method to define the interprocess association as an association definition [BP definition (150) contains the entrance node and exit node, in addition to the processing node representing one process to be treated in the workflow subsystem (180) to which the BP definition managing server (110) pertains; col. 5, line 8 – 29]; and

an association unit associating the process executed by the process executing device with the process executed by the other process executing device [document management unit (220); col. 4, lines 56 – 67].

30. As to claim 11, Saito teaches the process executing device in the data interchange system further comprising:

a device interprocess association unit associating the processes executed by the process executing device that are identical to the process executed by the other process executing device using the interprocess association information transmitted

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from the other process executing device [BP connection table (500) comprises the previous BP exit location (510) composed of the BP definition name (511) and the exit node name (512), and the next BP entrance location (520) composed of the BP definition name (521), the entrance node name (522) and the management server name (523); col. 5, line 52 – col. 6, line 3].

31. As to claim 13, Saito teaches an addressee definition storing unit storing a method for determining an addressee of the interprocess association information as an addressee definition, and wherein said interprocess association information distribution unit distributes, interprocess association information based on the addressee definition [BP connection table (500) comprises the previous BP exit location (510) composed of the BP definition name (511) and the exit node name (512), and the next BP entrance location (520) composed of the BP definition name (521), the entrance node name (522) and the management server name (523); the information to link between the exit node and entrance node; col. 5, line 52 – col. 6, line 2].

32. As to claim 14, Saito teaches interprocess association information distribution unit dynamically determines the addressee of the process association information using a part of a process executing data transmitted from the plurality of process executing devices [searches the entries of the BP connection table (500) where the BP definition name and the exit node name given as parameters have the same value as the previous BP exit location (510) (710); then the next BP entrance location (520) out of

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the entries of the BP connection table (500) obtained by retrieval is returned to the document management unit (220); col. 6, lines 35 – 57].

33. As to claims 18 and 20, see the rejection to claim 4 above.

Conclusion

34. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure.

U.S. Patent No. 6,151,583 discloses a workflow management method for holding processes including storing in a table a plurality of definition information sets for individually defining workflows.

CONTACT INFORMATION

35. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Li B. Zhen whose telephone number is (571) 272-3768. The examiner can normally be reached on Mon - Fri, 8:30am - 5pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, William Thomson can be reached on 571-272-3718. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

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